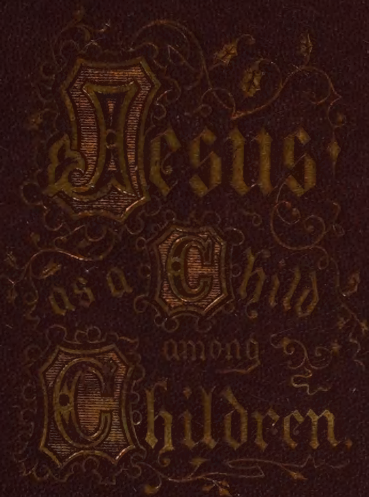


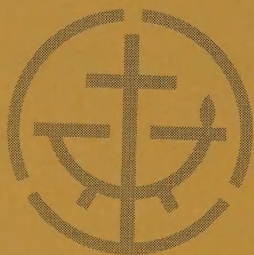
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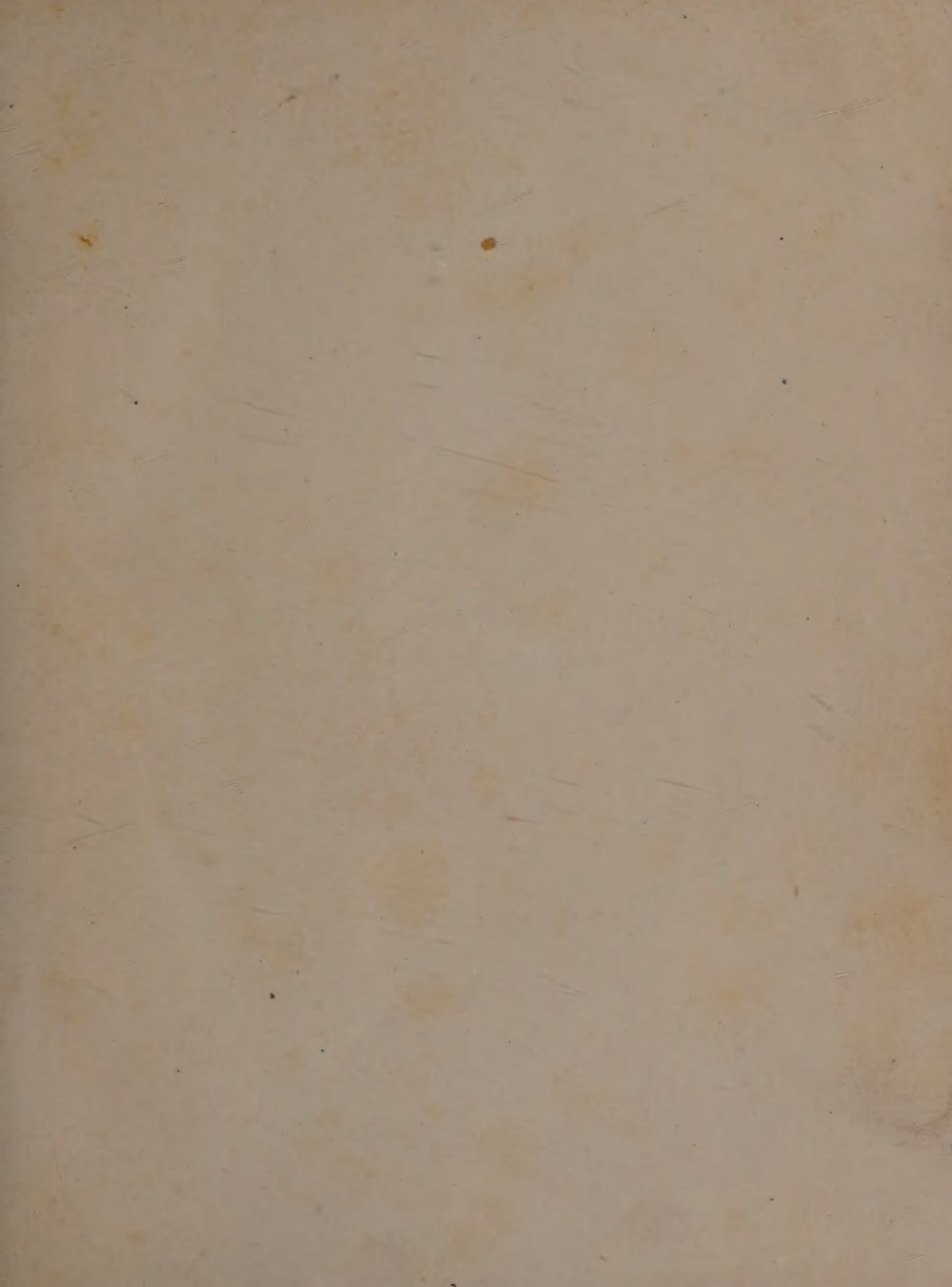
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From Annie,
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JESUS, AS A CHILD

AND

AMONG CHILDREN.

AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,

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THE BIRTH OF THE CHILD JESUS.



IBLE stories are always pleasant, and I suppose you have heard or read many which, I hope, gave you pleasure. I have now some to tell you which are as interesting as any others in the Bible.

Yes, there is no story that can be more interesting than that about the babe of Bethlehem.

It was a great many years ago that a little child was born into this world. His mother was a poor woman although she was descended from a king. She had no jewels nor fine

clothing to put on her little babe, nor money to buy a beautiful cradle for him. One who looked at the child might think it was like any other little babe,—except that he seemed poorer than any other.

But, some strange things happened before and at the time this babe was born. Hundreds of years before that time, good men, who were called prophets, told the people that such a babe would be born in that very place, and that he should be a great prince. They even said he should be called the Prince of Peace. A bright and glorious angel was sent down from Heaven, before his birth, to tell his mother that she should have a son. He also told her that this son should have a kingdom that would never end!

At the time of his birth, too, strange things

happened. Some shepherds were watching their flocks of sheep at night, on the plains of Judea, and all at once they heard the sweetest music. They had never heard such music before. A beautiful angel appeared to them and told them not to be afraid. Said he, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

The angel told them if they would go to Bethlehem they would find the babe in a manger. A great many angels gathered while this one was talking with the shepherds and they all sang praises to God, saying: "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, good will towards men." Do you not wish you could have heard them?

When the angels were gone back to Heaven, the shepherds said one to another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this that has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

So they hastened to the place, and there they found Mary the mother, and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger.

A manger was a very rude, rough place, not fit for people to live in, and yet it was in such a place, dear children, that this babe was lying. Was it not strange that the Son of God should be born so poor and lowly, and have so rude a cradle? He had left the glories of Heaven, where angels bowed before Him and cast golden crowns at his feet, and had come down to earth and become a little babe lying in a manger! The princes of this world have soft

beds and silken coverings. They are ornamented with jewels and gold. But our blessed Saviour chose to be poor. The whole world was at his command.

It was love to you, and to me, and to our fellow creatures, dear children, that brought the Son of God from Heaven. He wanted to save you and me, and all the world from the power and punishment of sin. Was not such love to sinners wonderful? Will you not love Him, and try to serve Him? The Bible tells us that the angels look with wonder on the love of Christ for sinners, and rejoice when sinners are converted to Him. Was there ever a more beautiful story than this of the love of Christ? God the Father spared not his only begotten Son, but was willing to give him up to come down into this world to save it. Yes, "God so loved

the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16.

" On the long expected morn,
He was in a stable born ;
In a manger he was laid,
Where the horned oxen fed.

" Then how mean was his abode,
Who is called the Mighty God ;
Angels who before him bow,
Wondered that he stooped so low."

GIFTS TO THE INFANT JESUS



THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN TO THE CHILD JESUS.



HAT are those old men doing in the opposite picture? They are standing before a little infant! Is it not a strange sight? The mother who holds the babe in her arms is dressed very poorly. There is no sign of riches about the house or in the room where they are. But look again. The old men are pouring out treasures at the feet of the infant,—gold and sweet spices. Why is this?

They have traveled many miles. They have come from a very far country to see this young child. Do you know what led them to come? They loved to read God's holy word. In it they found that the Jews were to have a king different from Herod, who was king of Judea at that time. These men who came so far to find Jesus were called Wise Men, because they knew more than most people. They read in God's word that a star would mark the coming of the promised king. "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel." Num. xxiv. 17. They studied another book of God, the book of Creation. They saw in the sky a bright appearance, different from the sun and the moon and the stars. They thought this must be the star spoken of in God's word.

When they started on their journey this star went before them all the way. They thought it best to go first to Jerusalem to find the promised king, as it was the chief city of the Jews. When they came to Jerusalem they asked, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him." When Herod heard of their coming, and what they said, he was troubled and many others also. He began to fear that he might lose his kingdom. He was a very wicked king, and his people hated him. He had no cause to fear that Jesus would take his kingdom, and be king in his place. The kingdom Jesus was to have was very different from that of Herod. He came to reign over the hearts of men. Herod told the Wise Men to go and find Jesus, and when

they had found him, to bring him word, that he might go and worship him also. He asked his chief men where Christ would be born. They said in Bethlehem, for so the Prophet had written: "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people." Mic. v. 2.

The Wise Men then went on to Bethlehem, which was about six miles from Jerusalem. The star which had guided them still went before them till they came to Bethlehem, and then it stood over the very house where Jesus was. "When they saw the star they rejoiced with great joy," and when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother. No doubt these good men were still more joyful then. This they believed was

the promised king who was to reign, not only in Judea, but over the whole earth. What though he was poor, prophets had written of him hundreds of years before, such as David, Isaiah, Micah and others. A star had been sent to mark the place of his birth. Perhaps they heard also of the angels coming down to tell the Shepherds the good news. These wise men bowed down and worshipped the holy child. They opened their treasures, and freely presented to him gold, frankincense and myrrh. God told them not to go back to tell Herod as he had commanded them, but to return home by another way. Now, dear children, we have told you how much pains these Wise Men took to find Jesus. They were truly called Wise Men. This only is the true wisdom to know Jesus. He is the light of the world.

Are you trying to find him that you may worship him also? He is not far from every one of you. If you seek him earnestly you will be sure to find him.

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.”

Brightest and best of the Sons of the Morning,
Dawn on our darkness and send us thine aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on his cradle, the dew-drops are shining;
Low lies his bed with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch, and Saviour of all!

Say, shall we yield him in costly devotion,
Odors of Eden, and offerings divine;
Gems from the mountains, and pearls from the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, and gold from the mine?

Heber.

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THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.



THE Jews looked upon the Temple in Jerusalem as the most sacred and beautiful of all places, except Heaven. It was built for the worship of God. You have perhaps seen pictures of it or read about it in the Bible. It was

built on a high mountain. There was a law among the Jews, which God had given them, that every little boy that was born among them must be taken to God's house, to be presented to the Lord. There was also a law that a sacri-

fice must be offered at the same time, either of a lamb, or two doves or two pigeons.

Those parents who were too poor to offer a lamb to the Lord, took doves or pigeons and offered them. You remember perhaps, that Joseph and Mary were very poor. They took the infant Jesus with two doves to the Temple. We are not told what kind of clothes he had on when he was taken up to God's house. Some parents care a great deal about having fine clothes on their children. But this is not what God tells us to care for. He looks at the heart, not on the outward appearance.

There was a very good old man named Simeon, who lived at Jerusalem. God had told this good old man he should not die till he had seen Jesus the Saviour. He came into the temple at the same time that the child

Jesus was brought there. He took him up in his arms and said these beautiful words, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." He meant that he was now happy and ready to die since he had seen the promised Saviour.

He also told the people who were in the Temple some things about Jesus. Would you like to know what this good old man said? He said that Jesus would bring salvation to the world, and guide our feet in the way of peace. He said also, he would be a light to lighten the world. The world is very dark by reason of sin. There are great and powerful nations that do not worship God, or even know who God is. They are said "to sit in darkness" and Jesus was sent to give them light. Joseph and Mary wondered at the things that were

said of Jesus. But God had told the old man what to say about his dear Son, Jesus Christ, whom he had sent into the world.

There was a very good old woman also in the Temple at the same time, named Anna. She was of a great age, perhaps almost a hundred years old. She was a widow. She was also a prophetess. Do you know what that is? It means that she was able to tell things that were to take place long before the time when they came to pass. This good old woman had been a widow many years. She lived in the Temple, and prayed much to God and tried to serve him. I hope she began to serve him very early, because I am sure people who have served God all their days, must be very happy when they are old.

Anna, the prophetess, thanked the Lord that

she had seen the Saviour. She also told many things about him, to the people who stood around. No doubt God had made known to her, in answer to her prayers, many things about Jesus, that the people who were in the Temple knew nothing of. After Joseph and Mary had done what they had to do in the Temple, according to the law of the Lord, they took the child Jesus into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. Do you remember any other little boy, dear children, who was taken up to the house of the Lord when he was very young by his mother? Hannah took her son Samuel to give him to the service of God. She left him to live in the house of God and wait on the Lord's minister, good old Eli. Parents ought always to give their children to God when they are young. They ought to begin very soon to

teach them their duty to God, if they want them to be God's dear children.

“Jesus! Saviour! Son of God,
Who, for me, life's pathway trod;
Who, for me, became a child;
Make me humble, meek and mild.

“I, thy little lamb, would be,
Jesus, I would follow thee;
Samuel was thy child of old,
Take me, too, within thy fold.”



THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.



THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT WITH THE CHILD JESUS.



o you not see in the opposite picture the same little infant that you saw in the manger with straw for his bed? Again you saw him with his mother, and aged men kneeling before him and presenting their treasures. Next you saw him in the arms of good old Simeon in the Temple. Now he seems to be about taking a journey with Joseph and Mary. Where do you think they are going? They have a long way to

travel, even from Judea to Egypt. Do you know where Egypt is? It is the same country where the children of Israel were kept in bondage so long, and where Moses was put into the little ark, by the river side, to save him from a cruel king. But why is the child Jesus taken to Egypt? Just for the same reason that Moses was put by the river side. It was because wicked men wanted to put him to death.

An angel came by night to Joseph in a dream, and told him to take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Egypt, because Herod, the king, wanted to kill him.

When Herod found the Wise Men did not come back to Jerusalem, to tell him where Jesus was, he was very angry. He sent men out to kill all the children from the age of two

years and under. He hoped in this way to kill Jesus also, but he was by that time safe in Egypt. The same God who kept Moses safe in the little ark, and Daniel safe in the lion's den, could have kept Jesus safe in Judea. But it was the will of God that he should be taken to Egypt.

Perhaps you do not think how easy it is for God to protect those who put their trust in him. Some children think they are safer when all is light about them than when it is dark. But they forget that God only can keep us from evil. We do not know when danger is near. Sometimes the very thing we do to keep out of danger brings us into it. God has almighty power, and he is everywhere present. Not a sparrow can fall on the ground without his knowledge; and every hair upon our heads

is numbered by him. He keeps our breath. He preserves us from falling, and from sickness and from death. If he should forget or forsake us a single moment we should die and return to the dust of which we are made. Learn then to put your trust in him to whom the darkness is as the light, and who is able to keep in safety not only your life and limbs, but your precious souls.

Think, dear children, how much sorrow Herod's cruelty to the little children must have caused their poor mothers. How would you feel to see your dear little sisters or brothers taken from their mother's arms, and carried away by cruel men to be killed? This cruel work of Herod had also been spoken of long before by the good prophet Jeremiah. In Rama there was a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping

for her children, and would not be comforted because they are not.

Do you know, dear children, why Herod did this cruel thing? He was jealous of the little child. He was afraid of losing his kingdom. He does not seem to have feared losing his soul, which was in much greater danger.

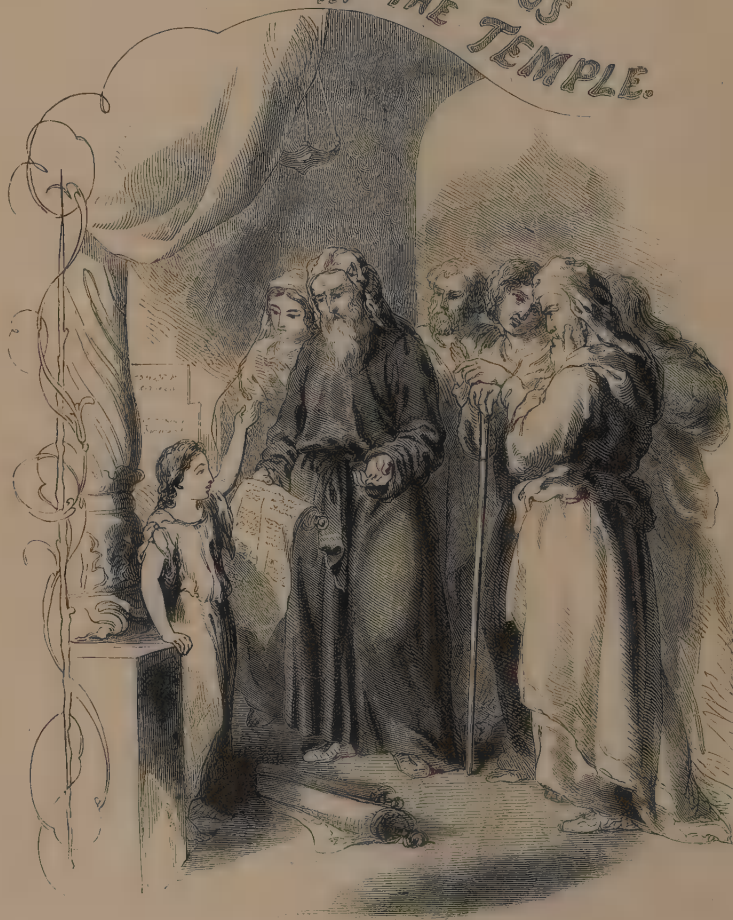
Joseph and Mary left Judea by night to go to Egypt. Perhaps the treasures given them by the Wise Men were very useful in their journey, as they were poor. They staid in Egypt until Herod was dead. God sent a dreadful sickness upon the wicked king, perhaps as a punishment for his cruelty, and he had much trouble of mind.

An angel again appeared to Joseph in a dream, and told him to take the young child and his mother and go again into the land of

Israel, for the wicked people who wanted to kill the infant Saviour were now dead. Angels are often sent by our Heavenly Father from heaven to watch over his children and keep them from harm. Do you want them to watch over you? Then you must try to do God's will. You see that Herod was not happy although he was a king and very rich. The Bible says there is no peace to the wicked. They are troubled here, but will be far more troubled in the next world, where the wicked shall have weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.* After Joseph and Mary left Egypt at the command of the angel, they took up their abode in Nazareth with Jesus, that another word of the prophet might be fulfilled about him, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

* Matt. xiii. 42.

THE CHILD JESUS
IN THE TEMPLE.



THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE WITH THE DOCTORS.



ANY of my young readers may have seen a large picture of Christ in the Temple with the learned Jews. But they do not kneel before him nor present treasures, as the wise men did who went so far to find him. No, they do not know that he is Jesus, the promised Messiah. They do not own him as their king. They do not put their arms around him as good old Simeon did.

Who are these old men? They are called

doctors of the law. This means that they teach the law of God. They have studied his law, which was given to the Jews, and are teaching the people in the Temple. What is Jesus doing among them? He is talking with them, and asking them questions. They were much surprised at the knowledge he showed, and no doubt thought him a very uncommon child. But they do not seem to have known any more about him at this time. Do you know what place they are in? It looks like a very different place from the stable where the shepherds found Jesus. This is a room in the beautiful Temple at Jerusalem, which we told you of before.

But how did Jesus get there? We do not see Joseph and Mary in the picture. Jesus stands alone among these aged men. Joseph

and Mary had come to Jerusalem to attend a feast of the Jews called the Passover, and brought the child Jesus with them. As soon as the feast was over, they started on their journey home, thinking Jesus was in the company. When they had traveled one day, they missed him, and returned to Jerusalem to find him. After three days they found him in the Temple. His mother said to him, "Son, why hast thou dealt thus with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." "How is that ye sought me?" said Jesus, "know ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

Perhaps you may think, dear children, that this was a strange answer to give to his mother. But it was not. He knew just the work he had come from heaven to do, and that no time

must be lost. No doubt a part of it was to talk with these doctors of the law in the Temple.

We are told that Jesus asked them questions. Would you like to know what the questions were? We cannot tell you that. Perhaps Jesus wished to draw out what they knew of the king and Saviour expected by the Jews.

Jesus, you recollect, had been living at Nazareth. We read in the Scriptures that he was subject to his parents. This means that he was obedient to them. We want you, dear children, to think of the answer Jesus gave his parents when they inquired about his absence. "Know ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" You also have business to do for your Heavenly Father. Perhaps you will say, Oh, I am very young yet, I have not much to do but play. This is a mistake.

You are not to stop playing, but you have something of much more importance. You have your Heavenly Father's will to do. He asks you to love him and serve him. This is what you were made for.

It is right to play. This is of service to your health. But you must remember that you have a precious soul to care for. You must pray, in the name of Jesus, to your Father in heaven. You must obey your parents, be kind and gentle to your brothers and sisters and playmates. This is the way to grow in favor with God and man, and be prepared to live with Jesus in heaven.

"I now will try to tell you
In simple words and true,
About the daily duties
God wishes you to do ;

“Your little hands to use
In many a little deed
Of kindness and compassion
For every one in need;

“Your little eyes to learn
To look on all the things
Which God has made—more beautiful
Than robes and crowns of kings;

“Your little tongue to keep
From every angry word,
Your little feet to learn
To run the heavenly road.”

BLESSING
THE
CHILDREN.



JESUS BLESSING THE CHILDREN.



VERY child in this Christian land ought to know Jesus as the Good Shepherd. He will take care of them and keep them from all harm, if they will put themselves under his care. I think nothing is more beautiful in the life of

Jesus, when he was upon the earth, than his tender regard for little children. How ready he was to receive them when they were brought to him by their mothers? We are told he took them up in his arms and blessed them.

Their mothers had no doubt seen how Jesus loved to do good, and thought they would like very much to have his blessing on their dear little children.

His disciples did not know how much he loved them, and feared, perhaps, they would trouble their Master. They said to the mothers, Take them away. But Jesus said, "No, suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." These mothers, no doubt, thought the very best thing they could do for their children was to bring them to Jesus, and truly it was so. Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd. A kind shepherd takes little lambs in his arms when they are weary or sick, and carries them in his bosom. A little girl once went home from church much delighted. "Mother," said she,

“I heard the child’s gospel to-day. The preacher said, ‘Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.’”

Jesus invites you now, dear children, just as much as when he was on earth, to come to him. You must try also and persuade others to come. A little girl was once on a visit to her uncle’s house. It was on the evening of the Lord’s day,—a time when her mother had been in the habit of teaching her from the Bible. She said, “Uncle, I wish you would tell me something about Jesus, as mother does when I am at home?” The uncle tried to tell her some little thing to amuse her, but she was not satisfied. “Why, don’t you know about Jesus?” she asked with surprise. The question troubled him. He was a stranger to

Jesus, but from that time he sought to know him.

A little boy who had never been taught to keep the Sabbath as a holy day, was playing near one of the churches on a summer afternoon, when he heard the preacher's voice in the church, and went up, on the steps, to listen. The minister was speaking of the love of Jesus to children. The little boy listened with much interest. He often went afterwards, and was persuaded to go into the Sunday-school, and loved to go. Some months afterwards he was taken sick, and the doctor said he would die. His mother tried to tell him so, but her heart was almost broken. "Mother," said he, "can you find the words Jesus said to little children?" His mother found them, and read them to him. He said, "Mother, my teacher said that Jesus

meant for me to come. If I die, Jesus will take me." After a little while, he said, "Mother, lay my finger right on that verse. Let me die with it there, then Jesus will see the words. He said come, and he'll let me come. He'll take Jemmy." He died with his finger on the words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me." Will you not believe his kind words to you, my dear children, as Jemmy did. Jesus means you, every little boy and girl, that reads this sweet story of Jesus. Go to him now, and be one of his little lambs.

See Israel's gentle Shepherd stands,
With all engaging charms ;
Hark ! how he calls the tender lambs,
And folds them in his arms.
"Permit them to approach," he cries,
"Nor scorn their humble name ;"
For 'twas to save such souls as these,
The Lord of angels came.

We bring them, Lord, in thankful hands,
And yield them up to thee ;
Joyful that we ourselves are thine,
Thine let our offspring be.

Ye little flock, with pleasure hear,
Ye children seek his face ;
And fly with transports to receive
The blessings of his grace.



HOSANNAS OF THE CHILDREN.



HOSANNAS OF THE CHILDREN.



GAIN, on the opposite page, you see the child Jesus among the little ones. Where are they, and what are they doing? They are in the Temple, which you have read of before. They are lifting up their youthful voices in praise of Israel's King, the Lord Jesus. He had come to Jerusalem riding on an ass' colt, on which no one had ever sat before. A good prophet, named Zechariah, had many hundred years before said he would do so.* As Jesus

* Zech. ix. 9.

rode along, a great multitude of people followed him, and cast their clothing in the way. They also cut down branches of trees and strewed them in the way. Then they sang hosannas to the Son of David, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven—glory in the highest."

And the children joined in these praises with glad voices. They followed Jesus into the Temple, lifting high their branches as banners to his honor.

Some of the chief men among the Jews, who did not believe that Jesus was the Saviour, were much displeased at the honors which were paid to him. They asked him to bid them to be silent. But he said, "Have ye not read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?'" He

also said, if he should tell them to be silent the very stones would cry out. He meant by this, that there was great cause why he should be praised. He had done many wonderful works. He was the only true king and Saviour of the world. He could easily make the stones speak his praise, if he chose. Nothing was too hard for him to do. No doubt, Jesus was much pleased when he saw how gladly the children received him, and so acknowledged him as the son of David and the Saviour of sinners.

We do not read, that Jesus entered into Jerusalem with a great train of horses and carriages as the great men of this world often do. Although king of heaven and earth, he chose only an ass' colt to ride on. This suits well with the stable and the manger in which he chose to lay when an infant, and also with the

poverty in which he lived afterwards. He once said to one who wished to follow him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Often he passed the night on the cold mountains in prayer for sinful men. His days were spent in preaching to them the way of life, and in healing the sick. Could the multitude praise him too much? Could the children be too ready to honor him? Ah! no, they never could praise him as much as he deserved to be praised.

We read in the Bible, that "a great multitude, that no man can number, stand before his throne in heaven." And what do they say? "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever."

Would you not like, dear children, to have been among those who were singing the praises of Jesus so joyfully in the Temple? He will be just as well pleased to hear them from you now as from them. He can hear the faintest whisper of praise from your lips. He listens to the feeblest prayer that infant lips can utter, and marks every thankful feeling in your hearts. Will you not say, with king David, in one of his beautiful Psalms :

I'll praise him while he lends me breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my noble powers!

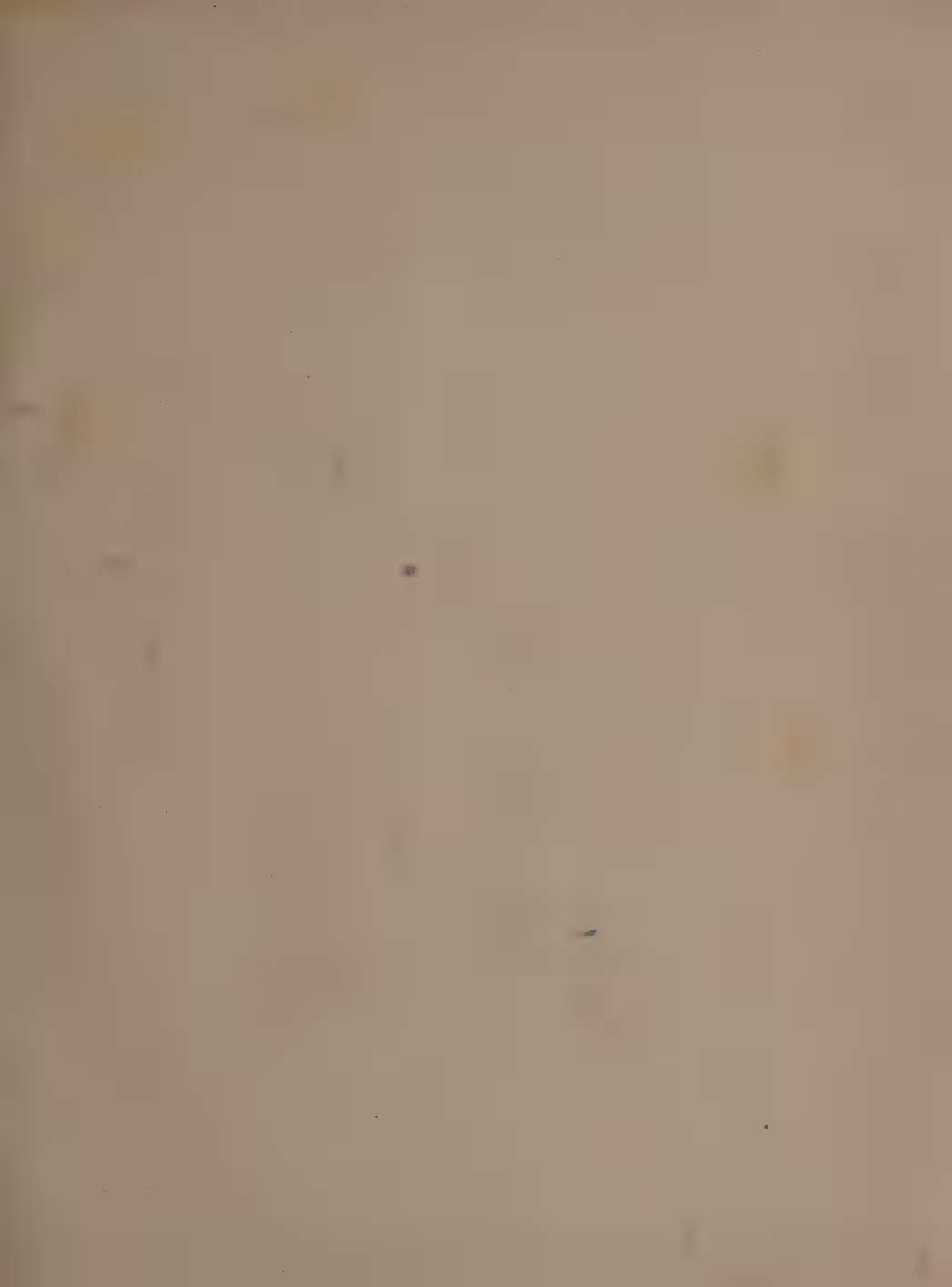
How glorious is our heavenly King,
Who reigns above the sky?
How shall a child presume to sing
His dreadful majesty?

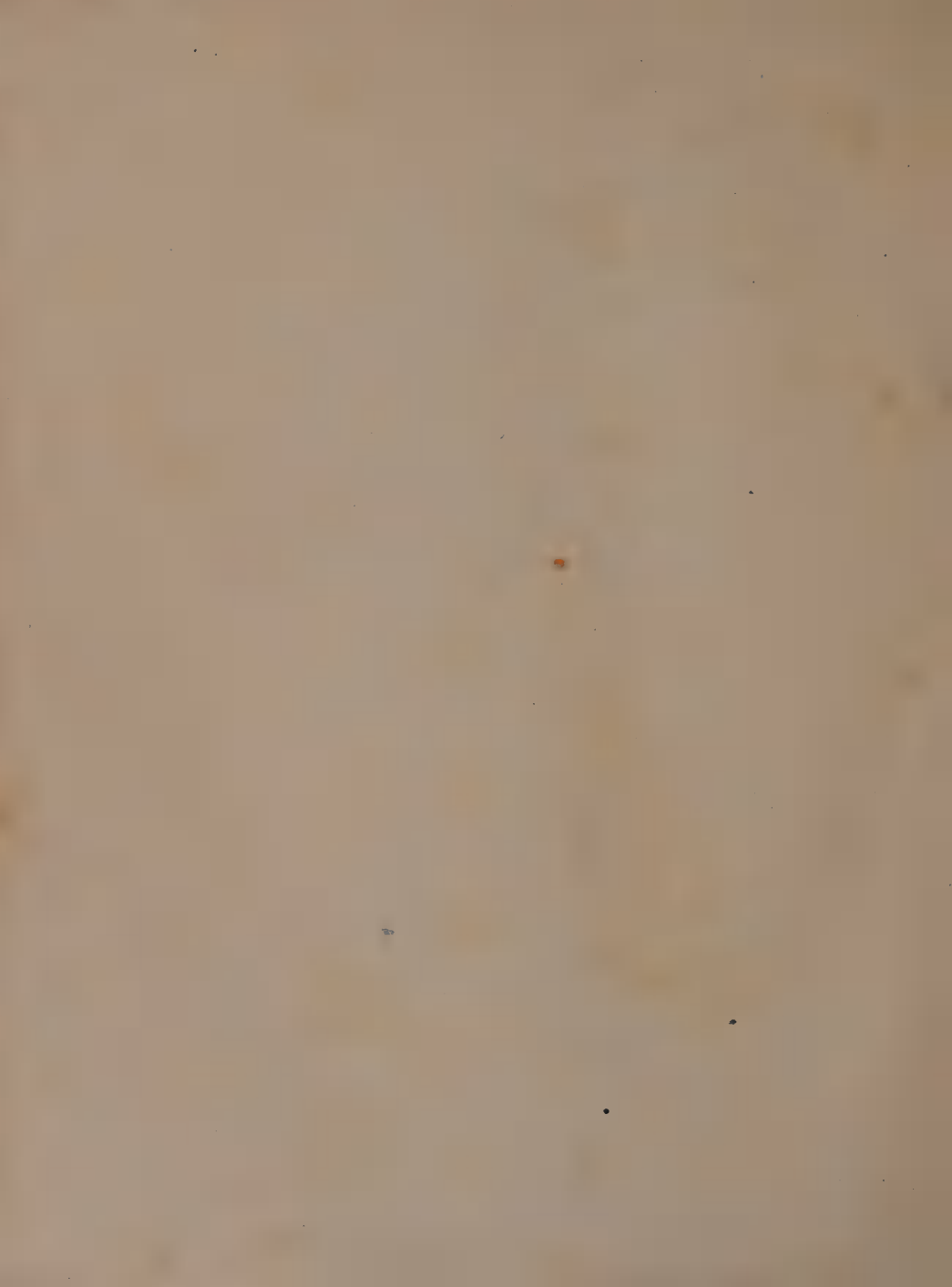
How great his power is, none can tell,
Nor think how large his grace ;
Nor men below, nor saints that dwell
On high before his face.

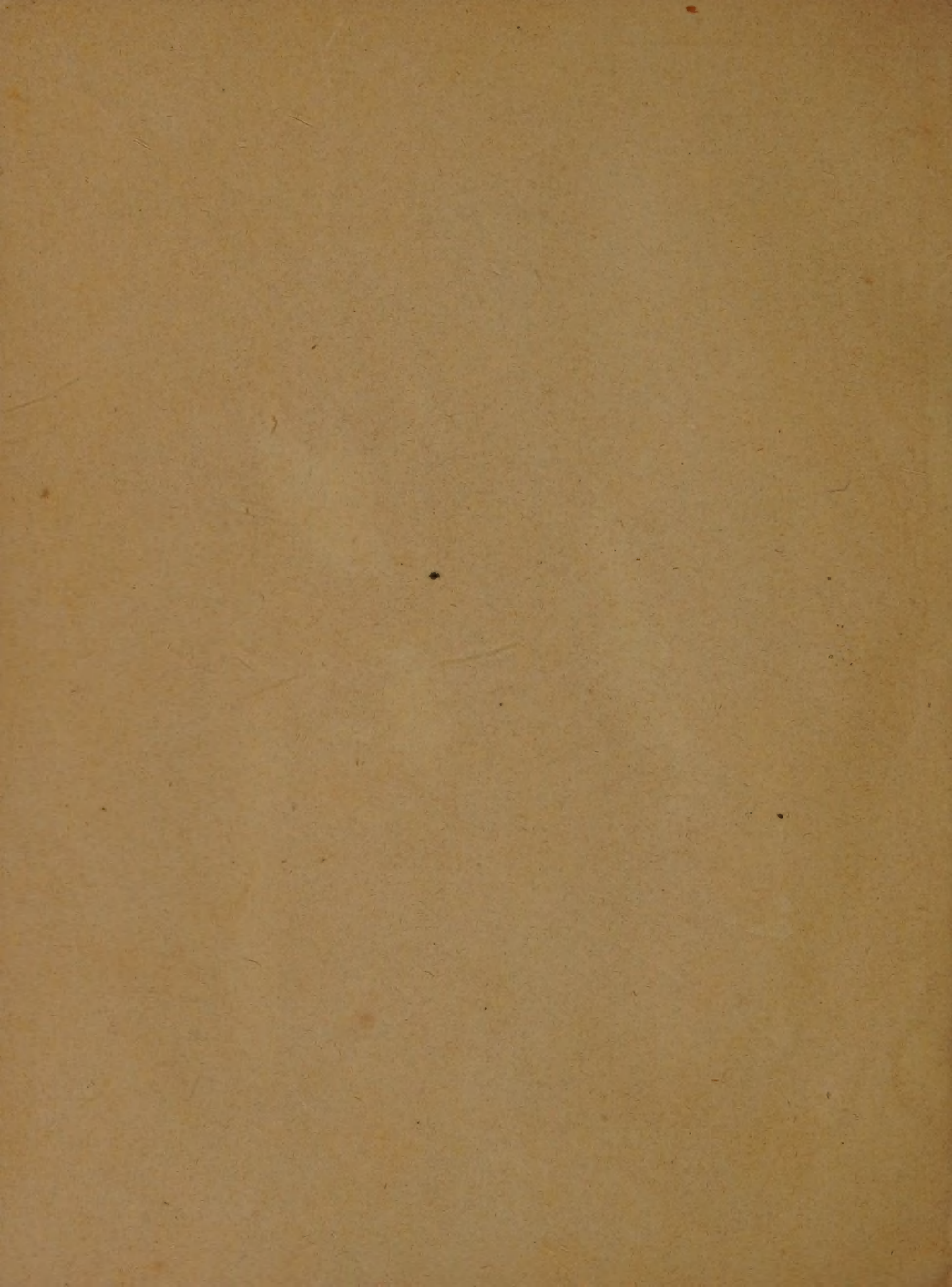
Nor angels that stand round the Lord,
Can search his secret will ;
But they perform his heavenly word,
And sing his praises still.

Then let me join this holy train,
And my first offerings bring ;
Th' eternal God will not disdain
To hear an infant sing.









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